**Systematic Reviews**

“The purpose of a systematic review is to sum up the best available research on a specific question. This is done by synthesizing the results of several studies.

A systematic review uses transparent procedures to find, evaluate, and synthesize the results of relevant research. Procedures are explicitly defined in advance, in order to ensure that the exercise is transparent and can be replicated. This practice is also designed to minimize bias.

Studies included in a review are screened for quality, so that the findings of a large number of studies can be combined. Peer review is a key part of the process; qualified independent researchers control the author’s methods and results.” (Campbell Collaboration)

**Step One – Research Question**

Establish a well formed research question and/or objectives for the study.

**Step Two – Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Define the criteria to be used for selecting studies to be included and excluded from the project for final analysis, such as currency, population, study methodology, and focus of the research question.

**Step Three – Literature Search**

Conduct a comprehensive search of all the literature using multiple approaches. Consider extensive database searching, browsing of journals and conference proceedings, citation searching of bibliographies, cited references, a Web search, and organizations and researchers.

**Step Four – Screening**

Use the inclusion criteria and the research question/objectives as a guide to select the studies/articles to be used for the final analysis. When it is not clear from the abstract whether the inclusion criteria are met, the entire article must be read.

**Step Five – Data Extraction**

After screening, all the selected studies/articles must be read and reviewed to extract the relevant data to answer the research question. The elements to be considered for data extraction vary with each systematic review. A data extraction form is helpful for this step.

**Step Six – Data Analysis and Conclusions**

Quantitative data that is similar across studies can be analyzed statistically. Qualitative data and inconsistent quantitative data can be analyzed using narrative/textual analysis methods. Using both statistical and narrative analysis in tandem make for a more thorough review. Results then need to be reported.

**Example Systematic Review: Commitment and trust in librarian-faculty relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Inclusion and exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key mediating variable model of relationship marketing (Morgan &amp; Hunt, 1994)</td>
<td>Relationship commitment (Morgan &amp; Hunt, 1994)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Literature Search**

To locate material from multiple disciplines, we searched twenty subject specific databases, Google Scholar and the Directory of Open Access Journals. We also analyzed bibliographies of retrieved articles and conducted a cited reference search. In total, we collected 521 articles related to faculty/librarian relationships, to which we applied our inclusion and exclusion criteria.

**Screening process**

- 172 articles included at abstract stage
- 219 articles excluded at abstract stage

**Data Extraction**

- 63 articles identified by browsing bibliographies and searching Google Scholar DOAJ and grey literature repositories
- 153 articles analyzed for KIV modeling variation
- 12 articles met all inclusion criteria and were included for final analysis
- 261 articles excluded from final analysis

**Data Analysis / Conclusions**

- Communication positively contributed to trust
- Relationship benefits positively contributed to commitment
- Shared values contributed to trust & commitment
- Strong commitment & trust allowed for cooperation and an unharmed relationship in the face of uncertainty, functional conflict, and opportunistic behavior

**Thoughts on the Methodology**

**Benefits**

- Useful to distill and synthesize an excess of information
- Useful to compile information on a topic when only a small amount of information has been published
- Explicit methods limit bias in article selection and aid in replication of the study
- Sufficient criteria strengthen the value of the review
- Can draw together information on a topic to resolve discrepancies or to use the information for training
- Can identify gaps in the literature to inform future research
- Can prevent unnecessary repetition of primary research
- Can be done by anyone motivated to follow through on the process
- Librarians’ search skills make them uniquely qualified to conduct this type of study

**Challenges**

- Time consuming to plan, search, access, read, code and analyze the amount of information necessary for
- More than one person needs to be involved in a review increasing the cost in time and personnel investment
- The quality of the review depends on the quality of research and the published literature
- Article retrieval depends on the accuracy of abstracting and indexing of the literature
- If the method is new to the researcher, it requires more time to negotiate the steps of the systematic review

**Works Cited**


More information about our study can be found at: directory.vancouver.wsu.edu/phelps/SueFPhelpsSystematicReviews